

# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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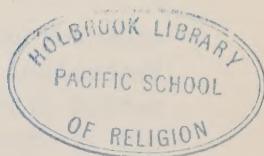
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the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES  
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS  
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION  
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



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May 14, 1948

## Amsterdam Special

### Special Opportunities at Amsterdam

A two-week course in ecumenical education will be offered at Amsterdam in addition to the regular programme and the special programme prepared for the alternates, youth and visitors. We refer to three features which are being carefully planned:

1) Ecumenical Literature.- Arrangements have been made for a book-store in the Concert Hall in which there will be displayed the best ecumenical literature which has been produced by the various Churches and countries as well as by the World Council itself. This display will reveal the amazing amount of time and thought that Churchmen have given to the consideration of the ecumenical movement in the past few years. A limited amount of this literature will be free and others may be purchased.

2) Ecumenical Exhibition.- Since it is through the eye that we gain such vivid and lasting impressions, an ecumenical exhibition to be displayed in the corridors of the Concert Hall is planned. By means of this exhibition the Assembly people will be able in a very short time to see something of the scope of the work of the World Council of Churches since each Department will exhibit its work and programme. The exhibition is prepared for display not only for Amsterdam but also for later occasions in various countries where there is a desire to have an ecumenical exhibition. The panels are of a size easy to pack and transport. Inquiries concerning this display can be addressed to the Geneva office, 17 route de Malagnou.

3) Religious Films.- Religious films, film stripe and slides will be shown daily in a nearby school in order to acquaint those particularly interested with all the latest and best in the field of visual education. Descriptive literature concerning this material will be available at the place of showing. Orders for these visual aids can be placed with those in charge, as well as for the official 16 mm. sound film of the Amsterdam Assembly itself. E.P.S.Geneva



GREAT BRITAIN"Lambeth and Amsterdam"

"I ask you to pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon two conferences of Christian leaders, one at Lambeth Palace and the other in Amsterdam", writes the Right Reverend G.K.A. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, in a pastoral letter to his Diocese for Whit Sunday, May 16, 1948. Dr Bell traces the history of the Lambeth Conference, begun in 1867, and held at intervals of ten years. More than three hundred bishops of the Anglican communion are expected from every part of the globe. The subjects of their discussions will be: "God in His Church and in His World", and many important topics will be considered under that heading.

The Bishop goes on to speak as follows of the Amsterdam Assembly: "It is a wonderful thing that in this very year when the world is so disunited, the Christian forces should be coming so much closer together.

"I have myself been in the heart of the ecumenical movement for many years. To sit, as I have done, side by side with Orthodox, Lutheran Old Catholic, Methodist and Reformed churchmen from the Old World and the New, for common counsel on social, international, and moral problems, from the Christian point of view, is to taste and see how good and joyful a thing it is to dwell together in unity. To hear church leaders of different communions from countries which fought against one another in the world war, preach Christ crucified from the same pulpit in Geneva, eleven months after the war, is to receive a new impression of the power of the universal Gospel.

"The World Council of Churches is a 'fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. All the member Churches remain independent. The World Council does not interfere with their doctrine or their government. But it is a permanent organ for helping them to present the Christian witness together..."

"The Church, as we know it, is weak and divided. To many it seems irrelevant and remote from realities. Churchmen and churchwomen may well feel shame, and face the tasks to which they are called with fear and trembling. And yet there is a great work to be done through the Church of God. It exists to bear witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and to proclaim His Kingship over all created things. It has therefore also to defend the freedom of the individual human being; to resist tyranny wherever found; to maintain every man's right to a just share of the good things of this life; and to seek peace between all nations.

"I ask you to join with me in prayer that the Holy Spirit may lead the Bishops at Lambeth, the delegates at Amsterdam, and all the people of God to a whole-hearted devotion to these duties." E.P.S. Geneva

An Urgent Appeal to the Reconstruction Department of the World Council

Reports that Russia intends to speed up return of prisoners of war to Germany to a rate of 100,000 a month in the near future have prompted an urgent appeal in their behalf by the Hilfswerk, German Protestant relief agency.



The Hilfswerk appeal, received by the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, pleaded for contributions of men's clothing, shoes, beds and bedding and food for the former POW's.

"Already we are unable to meet the most urgent demands for clothing", the appeal said. "With sadness in our hearts we have to send away from our camps and homes thousands and thousands of returnees who are ragged and tattered and whom we would have liked so much to help."

Clothing collections have been taken in the German Churches for the returnees, but these are inadequate. "Therefore, we now apply to our friends and brethren abroad with this special request, and hope that, in face of the love which unites us and which already helped us so much in our activity, our appeal will be heard."

Hilfswerk estimated that about half of the returnees will have to be provided with shirts, underwear, jackets, trousers, overcoats, stockings and shoes. It said it intends to help only the most urgent cases in relief camps and leave all other clothing needs to the care of the communities. Beds for 1,400 returnees needing recuperation are available at Hilfswerk rest homes, and with an average stay of four weeks each, about 17,000 can be cared for during a year, it was reported. Through a system of "godparents" that has been set up by Hilfswerk, additional returnees are cared for in private homes and others are being helped in finding homes and employment.

As a result of an earlier appeal made by the Reconstruction Department, officials of Church World Service (interdenominational relief agency in the U.S.A.) recently diverted supplies of men's clothing and shoes, sent to Germany for other purposes, to transit camps at Munsterlager and Friendland in the British occupation zone. These two camps, through which pass repatriates for the American and French zones, as well as for the British zone, currently have been receiving about 2,500 ex-prisoners daily from Russia and Poland.

Church World Service said as soon as additional contributions of men's clothing and shoes are available it will ship them for use of the returnees. Used clothing and other needed supplies are also sought from other countries.

The ex-POW's on their return from the East wear the remnants of their Wehrmacht uniforms, which by this time are filthy and ragged, and their feet are normally wrapped in sacking. One of the most distressing features of the situation is that when they do return to Germany a very considerable number of them only then discover that their homes have disappeared and that their families are now no longer traceable.

E.P.S. Geneva

NORTH AMERICA

"One World in Christ"

Sixty-six Protestant denominations in the United States and Canada have decided to start a campaign for a Programme of Advance of foreign mission. As an aftermath of war Protestant Christianity finds itself facing a world situation which calls for something far over and above what has been done before if the



the Church is to meet its missionary obligation and responsibility. In an effort to arouse the Church membership as a whole to a sense of the urgency and need for greater participation in the ongoing world mission of the Church, some twenty-six Boards are planning simultaneous coordinated meetings.

The first step will be the Foreign Missions Assembly, to be held in Columbus, Ohio, from October 6 to 8, 1948. The 3500 delegates are to be leaders of denominational life, already committed to the cause of Christ overseas. Their task will be to carry out into their denominations the inspiration, conviction and sense of togetherness in the work of foreign missions which they have gained at the Assembly.

In order to present the Programme of Advance to the public at large, a series of regional meetings, unique in nature, will be held all over the American continent from October 19, to November 19, 1948. These meetings should focus the attention of the entire Christian community on the desperate spiritual needs throughout the world and the responsibility of Protestant Christianity for bringing about a Christian world recovery.

Since the goal sought is strengthening the total overseas work of each of the cooperating denominations rather than raising a common fund outside of denominational treasuries, these meetings have been planned as denominational conferences, held simultaneously but separately in each city, except for the one session when all these denominational conferences will sit together in a single interdenominational rally.

This foreign missionary enterprise is not a North American enterprise, but North America's share in a world enterprise, in which national Christian Churches and Christian Councils share with the Foreign Missions Conference and the corresponding conferences of foreign mission societies in Europe and Australasia the responsibility for planning, carrying on and supporting the total undertaking. The conviction of those engaged in the enterprise is that spiritual unity will be attained through going forward together towards One World in Christ - a world united through a common faith in God through Christ and so thoroughly "in Christ" that His commandment to love one another is fulfilled in all human relationships.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

For Improving Russian-American Relations

According to the executive secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, which won the Nobel Peace Prize for 1947 along with its British counterpart, the London Service Council, the prize money would be used to improve Russian-American relations.

Dr Clarence E. Pickett, executive secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, made the announcement at a Committee conference at Yale University. He said that the Committee "in consultation with Russian and American officials was searching earnestly for the most effective contribution" it could make. He added that Committee progress in the exploration of possible effective contributions has "led it to believe that concrete, constructive results can be achieved."

E.P.S. Geneva

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POLANDThe Position of the Churches

The last world war has brought great changes in the distribution of church members throughout the Churches in Poland. Owing to the systematic extermination of whole communities of Poles by the Nazis, and also as a result of cession of territory to the U.S.S.R., the number of church members has fallen considerably.

The Church with the largest number of members was, and still is, the Roman Catholic Church, which had 22,900,000 members in 1939, and now has about 19,500,000. The Orthodox Church which had some 4,000,000 members before the war, now has only 430,000, while the membership of the Polish Protestant Churches during the same period has fallen from 750,000 to 250,000.

Before the war the Orthodox and Protestant church members, together with the practising Jews, formed 36% of the total population; today they form only 4%. The Roman Catholics, who used to be 64% of the total population, are now in the overwhelming majority, forming 96% of the total.

But this fact is counterbalanced by the fact that the other Churches now enjoy equal privileges with the Roman Catholic Church before the law, whereas before the war - in spite of the freedom of conscience anchored in the Polish Constitution of 1921 - they did not receive recognition as organised church units. The State observes this innovation to the letter. In the Army there are now both Roman Catholic and Protestant chaplains. This is important, especially in districts where, as in East or West Prussia, the proportion of Catholics to Protestants is estimated as 4:1 (whereas up to 1945 the proportion was 1:4). However, the higher departments of State are keeping a careful watch to see that the religious minorities can preach their faith without restriction.

Up to the present time there is no complete separation between Church and State in Poland. The Protestant Theological Faculty of the University of Warsaw is maintained entirely by the State. In the schools confessional religious instruction is compulsory. But the different confessions must support their own clergy financially, and they only receive a small subsidy from the State for the reconstruction of their damaged church buildings. The leaders of the Polish Protestant Churches are in agreement in principle with this solution. Their aim is "to be independent in spiritual matters, and at the same time to enjoy the protection of the State." They regard the "conditions in the Canton of Zurich, in Switzerland, as the ideal solution for the relations between Church and State".

The Protestant Church in Poland is composed of the following denominations: the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, the Methodist Church, the Evangelical Reformed Church, the Baptist Church, the United Evangelical Church, the Union of Christian Churches of the Evangelical Confession, the Union of Evangelical Christians and the Anglican Church.

The non-Protestant Churches, which are independent of Rome, are the Russian Orthodox Church (with headquarters in Warsaw, but most of its members in the province of Byalistock, about 258,311 in number), the Mariavite Church (with over 51,000 members which has split away from the Old Catholic Church, and is now



itself divided into two groups), the Polish National Catholic Church (with 120,000 members, which split away from the Roman Catholic Church and has several thousand additional members in North America), and the Old Catholic Church (with 5,000 members) in which the Mass is read in Polish.

All these Churches are affiliated to the Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches of Poland, which has its headquarters in the building of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Warsaw. The President is the Lutheran Pastor Michalis, and the Vice-President the Lutheran Bishop Professor Szeruda. Each Church elects one or more representatives (according to their church membership) to this Council of thirty persons. Through this national Ecumenical Council the World Council of Churches in Geneva is in touch with the separate groups.

E.P.S.Geneva

#### Problems of Refugee "Specialists" Considered

With local arrangements made by the World Council of Churches Refugee Commission, one of the five agencies acting as hosts, a five-day conference on resettlement of refugee "specialists" - intellectual, scientific and artistic workers - was held recently at the Reformed Church Youth Hostel (Heimstätte für die reformierte Jugend) at Gwatt, Switzerland.

The conference, organised by the International Refugee Organisation, brought together nearly 60 refugee delegates from Germany, Austria and Italy, and government voluntary agency and international agency representatives.

In its final report, the conference said that the refusal of immigrant-receiving nations to accept refugee intellectuals together with manual workers is both inhuman and short-sighted. "It should be urged upon I.R.O. that in its negotiations with governments for mass immigration schemes it be insisted that a fair share of refugee 'specialists' be included", the report of the sub-committee on general problems stated. "The presence of specialists in a group of manual workers would be of great benefit to the receiving countries and be of definite moral value by providing spiritual and intellectual leadership during the adjustment period."

Efforts of the World Council of Churches Refugee Commission to obtain permission for refugee Protestant clergymen to accompany their communicants in group resettlement and a successful group movement of Orthodox to Argentina were described to the conference.

A representative of the Vatican Migration Bureau reported to the conference that the Vatican has sent a special emissary to South American countries to organise committees to work continually to increase the flow of immigration into those countries and to aid in the adjustment of refugees after their resettlement.

Four clergymen - a Protestant minister, a Roman Catholic priest, a Greek Catholic priest and a Rabbi - were among the refugees attending the conference.

E.P.S.Geneva



UNITED STATESA Positive Programme for Peace

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, meeting in special session on April 26, 1948, approved a "Positive Programme for Peace" from which we quote the following.

Addressing itself to the present international crisis the Federal Council states that "powerful forces have pushed mankind to the brink of an awful abyss. The first and urgent task is to check those forces. Therefore, we do not deal here with the long-range task of building peace, but with a short-range task of averting war without yielding sound democratic principles. We call upon our people immediately to change the present prevailing mood which makes for war. This will not remove the basic causes of the present tension, but it will provide an increased margin of safety."

The Programme is divided into seven points. Under point I it says:

"Our people should not tolerate any complacency about war. War would engulf all in misery and would bring other consequences quite the opposite of our intentions." A "preventive war" cannot be regarded "as an acceptable means of settling the present international conflict. Such a state of mind we unqualified condemn..."

"Our people should combat a mood of hysteria or blind hatred" declares point II. "A free society can survive only as its members have the self-control and self-restraint to protect themselves against that mood. So, our citizens who believe in their free society and want to preserve it must exercise sober self-control and exert themselves to stop others who would spread hysteria, whether for attack or for surrender... Those who influence public opinion may feel that sensationalism is needed to arouse and alert the American people... The fact is that panic started for one purpose seldom stops until it has overshot the chosen mark. There are features of Soviet conduct, and indeed features of our own national conduct, which are evil and which we should hate. But hatred of evil is very different from the hatred of people as a group..."

Under point III the Programme states: "Our people should reject fatalism about war. War is not inevitable. If it should come, it would be because of conditions that men could have changed. There is no irresistible tide that is carrying men to destruction. The evil forces at work are man-made and they can be man-changed. We do not believe that any government, whether our own or the Soviet, now wants war or is committed to war... It seems that the Soviet programme will be aggressively pushed to a danger point especially where the following conditions prevail: first, where economies are weak; second, where the working people can be made to believe that proletarian dictatorship offers their best hope of increased welfare; and thirdly, where man can be terrorised... The way to prevent war, therefore, is to change the conditions which tempt men to reckless and dangerous activities."

"Our people should not rely primarily on military strategy to meet Communist aggression", declares point IV. "Such reliance is more apt to bring war than prevent it. There should be greater concentration on positive programmes of an



economic, social, political and moral character. In times of international crisis men tend to look to military measures as a means of salvation. That is happening in America now. Nearly a year ago Secretary Marshall put forward the statesmanlike idea of the European Recovery Plan. In many respects, however, our recent international policy seems to have been much dominated by military thinking...

"The American people, in conformity with the principle of democratic government, should not permit policy making to pass predominantly into the hands of those who think primarily in military terms, as seems to be the case today. Our people and government should not feel satisfied with merely military measures but should diligently develop and carry through programmes of an economic, social, political and moral character. Thus, the real security of the United States and of the world may be safeguarded, and war may be averted."

Point V stresses: "Our people should press for positive programmes which have immediate possibilities for peace and justice. They could, for example, quickly move toward: a) Greater economic well-being throughout the world. b) Greater emphasis on increasing social welfare. c) Greater observance of human rights, to check terrorism. d) Greater use of processes of international conversation and negotiation."

"...Our present appeal to our people to press for economic, social, political and moral programmes for peace would not be convincing unless we could point to genuine possibilities of this character. a) One of the conditions which tempt Soviet leadership to aggressive action is the prevalence of economic distress. The Foreign Assistance Act... can serve greatly to change these conditions in Europe and also to some extent in China... b) Another condition which tempts Soviet leaders to aggressive action is the possibility of making men believe that the Communist parties are today the only ardent advocates of increased social welfare... There was a time when the Western democracies were supreme in prestige because of their dynamic pursuit of liberty, equality, and fraternity... Today... we ought to develop and make known constructive programmes which will again capture the imagination and enlist the support of those who are unsatisfied, of those who feel themselves exploited, and of those who want to make dreams come true. c) Still another of the conditions which tempt Soviet leadership to aggressive action is the possibility of frightening people from working against Soviet penetration... It is imperative that the United States take the lead... to secure prompt adoption of a covenant of human rights, within the framework of the United Nations. If our nation should quickly assume dynamic leadership of a movement to define and protect human rights... that action would do much to reassure peoples now frightened and to check the further spread of terrorism. d) The avenues of diplomatic conversation between the Soviet Union and the United States should be kept open and used... Likewise, avenues of religious, cultural, scientific and educational exchange should be kept open and developed as far as possible..."

"It is possible to get immediate results, which will decrease the threat of war, through economic, social, political and moral proposals which are well thought out and which it seems our nation is resolved to carry through."



Point VI declares: "Our people ought, each one of them, to contribute to a change of mood so as to increase the chance of averting war without compromise of basic convictions. This is a time for prayer. Also it is a time for action. Men of goodwill must promptly lay hold of the means at hand to increase the margin of safety against war. This is a task in which every one can play a constructive part: 1) Do not tolerate any complacency about war... 2) Combat a mood of hysteria or blind hatred... 3) Reject fatalism about war... 4) Oppose primary reliance on military strategy to meet Communist aggression... 5) Press for positive programmes which have immediate possibilities for peace and justice..."

Point VII states: "Our Churches ought to testify with renewed vigour to God's righteous love for all men and the reality of the Christian world fellowship. ... We are called to recognise the just condemnation of God's judgment but if we turn to Him in repentance and faith we shall avail ourselves of His mercy... Our Churches are part of a world-wide community of Christians. They have come into being as a universal fellowship in our own time through the work of the missionary movement and through the new discovery of the unity in Christ that binds Christians of many communions. Let us always remember the great company of fellow Christians in Russia with whom we share a common faith that should transcend all the differences that make for conflict. Already in many places Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition in His Church, even where Christians have been divided by the enmities of war. We find our ultimate hope for peace in the faith that God, through Christ, is seeking to draw all men to Himself and into fellowship with one another."

E.P.S. Geneva

## GERMANY

## The German Delegates Prepare for Amsterdam

The members of the German delegation to Amsterdam met recently at Echzell to prepare themselves for the Assembly, the Chairman being Pastor Niemöller, head of the Foreign Office of the Church. The conference enabled the delegates to make personal contact with one another and to discuss the questions which are to be dealt with at Amsterdam.

On the first day the discussions centred around questions raised in the papers by Pastor Niemöller, Professor Smend and Professor Niesel, concerning the constitution of the World Council, and concerning the special responsibility of the Evangelical Church in Germany at Amsterdam. "Two tendencies will become apparent at Amsterdam. One will be against the World Council becoming a sort of super-Church which restricts the affiliated Churches too much, the other tendency would like to promote this development and prevent the World Council from becoming a mere religious forum whose activities consist merely in conferences, committees and relief work. As Pastor Niemöller said, "The German delegation at Amsterdam must not be either an engine or a brake. It would be a motor if - after experiencing the dangers of artificial union during the German church-struggle - it now became an ardent promoter of artificial union in the world Church. It would be a brake if it failed to recognise the real concerns of the Oekumene and delayed matters by over-emphasising the special position of the Confessing Church.

"One important question which will come up at Amsterdam is whether the World Council is to be constituted on confessional or on territorial lines". The



German delegation discussed the value of both these principles, but did not arrive at any decision as to the exclusive validity of either method.

The second day was devoted to the central theme of Amsterdam, "Man's Disorder and God's Design". Explanatory talks were given by Dr Wolfgang Schweitzer (one of the Secretaries of the Study Department in Geneva), Professor Schlink, Dr Freytag, Dr von der Gablentz and Pastor Menn (head of the German Ecumenical headquarters in Frankfurt).

Several of the speakers emphasised that the "test of the World Council's authority would be its success or failure to discover at Amsterdam a united message of all the Churches concerning the political and social problems of our time." There was a very far-reaching debate on the subject of "East and West". The delegates from the Churches in the Eastern Zone of Germany drew attention to the responsibility of the German delegation to Amsterdam concerning this cardinal problem of contemporary history.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### UNITED STATES

#### Dr Gerstenmaier has an Interview with President Truman

Dr Eugen Gerstenmaier, the head of the "Hilfswerk" of the German Evangelical Churches, recently had an audience with President Truman at the White House in Washington to discuss the situation in Germany. Dr Gerstenmaier is spending a few weeks in America at the invitation of American church circles, and has also had talks with representatives of the government, of Congress and of the political world. He also had an interview with the administrators of the Marshall Plan.

Large public meetings were held in New York, St Louis, Chicago and other cities, at which Dr Gerstenmaier reported in detail on the present conditions in Germany, and thanked the Americans for their generous help. He had talks with leading personalities in church life, and the heads of the relief organisations, concerning the future programme of gift-parcels to Germany. E.P.S. Geneva

#### U.S.S.R.

#### Message from German Chaplains

German Protestant chaplains in the Soviet Union have written to the Berlin Church Chancellery, gratefully acknowledging receipt of the parcels of religious books (hymn-books and special books concerning evangelism), and have begged for more. They write that religious life in the prisoner of war camps is very active, and describe the Easter services in detail. One of the chaplains writes that two services are held every Sunday in his camp. He mentions daily services, weekly Bible groups and communion services on special days. The chaplains are giving the theological students regular teaching.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### GREENLAND

#### The Most Northern Church in the World

In Siorapaluk, 125 miles north of Thule on Greenland, there is a little settlement with 50-60 Eskimos. Now a wooden church has been erected, the most northern church in the world, and a Danish pastor holds services in Greenlandic.

E.P.S. Geneva

